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ABSTRACT

This information digest discusses current issues in the management of software collections and outlines several possible options for the cataloging and processing of microcomputer software and courseware. A statement of the problem indicates that treatment of microcomputer software is highly dependent on the type of library, size of the collection, variety and purpose of the collection, type of access to be provided, and type of organization. The "Guidelines for Using AACR2 [Anglo-American Cataloging Rules Second Edition], Chapter 9 for Cataloging Microcomputer Software," published by the American Library Association, are described briefly, including sources of bibliographic information; title and statement of responsibility area, general material designation; edition; file description; and notes. Examples of other procedures that have been developed are noted, including those of the American Association of School Librarians, the Ohio Media Association, and the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction. Other promising practices identified include the use of database management software for microcomputers to create online catalogs, produce master lists for circulation, and create charts. A 15-item bibliography is provided. (LMM)

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ERIC DIGEST

MANAGING COMPUTER SOFTWARE COLLECTIONS

As society's use of computers grows, more libraries of all kinds will acquire software for both in-house use and for their circulating collections. This digest will discuss current issues in the management of software collections and outline several possible options for the cataloging and processing of microcomputer software and courseware.

The Problem

The treatment of microcomputer software by libraries and other institutions is highly dependent on several factors, among them:

- The type of library;
- The size of the collection;
- The variety of the collection—
 - all commercially produced
 - locally produced
 - more than one program per disk
 - more than one version of the program
- The purpose of the collection—
 - in-house use only
 - circulating collection
 - other (wall chart, lists)
- Type of access to be provided—
 - card catalog
 - online catalog
 - cards generated by microcomputer
 - other (wall chart, lists)
- Type of organization—
 - Dewey Decimal
 - Library of Congress
 - locally developed scheme

Each repository has its own unique set of requirements and a thorough analysis should be done to determine the most effective means of handling each collection.

AACR2

The long-awaited *Guidelines for Using AACR2, Chapter 9 for Cataloging Microcomputer Software*, published by the American Library Association, was prepared "to assist librarians in applying the second edition of *Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR2)* to the description of microcomputer software and data files."

These guidelines are to be viewed as an interpretation of, rather than a substitute for, Chapter 9, "Machine-Readable Data Files,"

and should be used in conjunction with it. They also cover only commercially produced software.

These guidelines cover:

Sources of Bibliographic Information (Rule 9.0B). The chief source of bibliographic information to be used is that which is recorded internally, on the program itself. This makes access to the compatible microcomputer necessary in order to catalog such materials. In lieu of that, other potential sources include the labels on disks or containers, accompanying documentation, or published descriptions other than advertising.

Title and Statement of Responsibility Area, General Material Designation (Rule 9.1C). The use of "machine-readable data files" as a general material designation to directly follow the title is specified, although dissatisfaction with this GMD as inaccurate is acknowledged (Intner, 1983; Richards, 1983).

Edition (Rule 9.2). Includes a list of generic words which may be used to indicate a change in the program that resulted in a new issue. These include such terms as edition, version, level, release, or update.

This rule also discusses supplemental material, and cautions against transferring edition information from documentation to software.

File Description (Rule 9.5). To be taken from explicit statements in accompanying documentation, this statement can include numbers of files, number of logical statements, if given; physical medium; programming language; or the model or number of machine on which the program was designed to run. Other system requirements are given in the optional notes area.

Rule 9.5D outlines the treatment of subordinate files as accompanying materials, along with other documentation such as user manuals, textbooks, and program guides.

Notes (Rule 9.7B15; optional). "System Requirements and Disk Characteristics" includes description of the make and model of hardware, amount of memory required, operating system, and the kind and characteristics of any peripherals that are either needed or recommended.

Following the notes is a discussion of the cataloging of individual programs in a collection, with examples, and an extensive glossary of relevant terms.

It should be emphasized that these guidelines need to be used in conjunction with AACR2. In addition, they do not cover choice and form headings, subject cataloging, or classification.

Other Possibilities

In lieu of the above guidelines, many libraries and other organizations have developed procedures for dealing with their software acquisitions that suit their needs and are noteworthy.

The American Association of School Librarians distributes *Guidelines for Processing and Cataloging Computer Software for Schools and Area Education Agencies*, which was prepared by the Iowa Department of Public Instruction in 1982.

The authors base their ten suggestions for the order of processing software on AACR2 and practical experience. Especially helpful in this publication is the inclusion of sample catalog cards, book cards, pockets, and labels. Availability information for this and all items discussed will be given in the bibliography.

Other states have also published their procedures in various sources. The Ohio Media Association's *Microcomputers in the Media Center* includes a chapter entitled, "Cataloging and Storing Microcomputer Materials." In this chapter, Kathy Kneil offers suggestions for interpreting AACR2 for a high school media center. She also suggests using the alternative media designators, MCP (microcomputer program) or CP (computer program) to describe such materials more accurately.

Another media designator suggested by North Carolina ("For the Librarian..." 1983) is *Courseware*. This article, a brief how-to-do-it guide for cataloging and sorting software, also describes the practice of choosing a classification number and subject headings, setting up the card catalog, and processing and packaging instructional software.

The use of a flowchart of tasks associated with ordering, cataloging, and processing software for media centers is described by David L. Bullers and Linda L. Waddle in *Processing Computer Software for the School Media Collection*. Sample cards, labels, pockets, and storage containers are also featured in this revised edition.

Promising Practices

Other promising practices include the use of database management software for microcomputers to create online catalogs, produce master lists for circulation, or create charts (Baker, 1983; Dewey, 1984).

Baker's description of her elementary school's needs assessment, objectives, selection criteria for database management programs, types of lists produced, necessary documentation, and evaluation methods provide a fascinating case study.

The creation of a "Software Directory Wall Chart" (Dewey, 1984) for public libraries provides descriptions of possible software for the task with technical details, as well as user needs. A microcomputer-based production makes for easy updating and a variety of possible listings.

The practice of tracing computer programs as subjects offers card catalog users a complete listing of software possibilities and is a practical approach to this problem for small collections.

Conclusions

As is readily apparent from this review, there are any number of ways to tackle this soon-to-be-larger issue. These introductory items will form a solid foundation for a system designed to fit your needs as well.

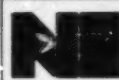
And, if we have all done our jobs, we will have Betty Minemier's "'Stranger, alike and large' rule. (1) Can a stranger, by using the regular library key, whether it be electronic, manual, or book catalog, find all our computer programs? (2) Can a user easily find all like materials—book, audiovisual, or computerized—on a particular subject in the regular library key? (3) If we get a much larger collection, will this scheme still work?" Or, perhaps better yet, her "'Heavenly home tonight' rule: If I am transported to my heavenly home tonight, will my successor condemn me to hell for the arrangement?" (Action Exchange, 1983).

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